

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 08144 241621Z

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 DRC-01 /040 W

----- 129428

R 241550Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO USIA WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9485

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USIAC

USIA FOR IAA, IPS

STATE FOR AF/C

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: MOBUTU CRITICIZES "CERTAIN FOREIGN
JOURNALISTS " FOR "LIES"

1. IN COURSE OF LONG SPEECH SEPTEMBER 22, CELEBRATING
THE REMODELING OF 20TH OF MAY STADIUM, PRESIDENT
MOBUTU CRITICIZED "THE BEHAVIOR OF CERTAIN FOREIGN
JOURNALISTS PRESENTLY IN THE COUNTRY" AND ACCUSED THEM
OF "HAVING WRITTEN LIES ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE
COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE."

2. "THEY HAVE SENT TO THEIR PAPERS, " SAID
MOBUTU, "ARTICLES SAYING THAT IN ZAIRE THERE IS NO
SECURITY, THERE IS NOTHING TO EAT, THAT VISITORS ARE
TREATED BADLY."

3. MOBUTU THEN APPEALED TO HIS PEOPLE TO REPLY
TO THIS "CHALLENGE LAUNCHED TO OUR HOSPITALITY BY
THESE JOURNALISTS." HE SAID THAT "SINCE 1965, OUR
COUNTRY HAS ACQUIRED A SOLID REPUTATION FOR HOSPITALITY.

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PAGE 02 KINSHA 08144 241621Z

WHEN THERE IS A CONFERENCE, THE PEOPLE NEVER

HIDE THEIR PREFERENCE FOR KINSHASA BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT THEY ARE ALWAYS WELL RECEIVED... BUT, ALL OF A SUDDEN, ONE AFFIRMS THE CONTRARY... IT IS NOT EASY TO BE ZAIRE."

4. HE THEN ENCOURAGED ZAIROIS TO "SHOW THESE STRANGERS THAT OUR HOSPITALITY IS NOT A MYTH" AND ASKED THE "ENTIRE POPULATION OF KINSHASA" TO BE NICE TO STRANGERS.

5. COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO KNOW TOWHOM MOBUTU IS REFERRING, SINCE POST HAS NOT SEEN REPORTERS' DISPATCHES NOR AS YET RECEIVED COPIES OF THEIR ARTICLES, BUT SEVERAL REPORTERS HAVE COMMENTED PUBLICLY ON THE GENERAL LAVISHNESS OF MOBUTU SPENDING-- FREQUENT USE OF DC-10, 747, MILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO VIRTUALLY REBUILD STADIUM, ETC. IT IS, HOWEVER, NOT CLEAR HOW MANY OF THESE RUMBLINGS WILL SEE--OR HAVE SEEN--PRINT.

6 AMERICAN PRESS, THOUGH FEW IN NUMBERS, HAS HAD GENERALLY ROCKY TIME THUS FAR WITH INADEQUATE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES, THOUGH ZAIRIAN OFFICIALS CONSTANTLY REASSURE JOURNALISTS THAT BY FIGHT TIME ALL BUGS WILL HAVE BEEN IRONED OUT.

7. THERE HAS BEEN, ON OCCASION, WHAT REPORTERS REFER TO AS "CENSORSHIP," WHICH APPARENTLY INCLUDES EVERYTHING FROM DEVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO MISINTERPRET REMARKS, TO TELEX OPERATORS REFUSING TO TYPE OUT COPY CRITICAL OF ZAIRE AND, ON ONE OCCASION, ZAIRIAN AT PRESS CENTER RIPPING UP ALREADY TYPED COPY OF JOURNALIST.

8. OFFICIAL LINE, AS EXPECTED, IS THAT THERE IS NO CENSORSHIP AS A POLICY, THAT THESE ARE SIMPLY OVR-ZEALOUS INDIVIDUALS REACTING IN AN UNFORTUNATE MANNER IN A STRESS SITUATION.

9. ATTEMPT BY PRESIDENT OF PRESS COMMISSION TO MAKE SINCERE APOLOGY TO JOURNALISTS FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KINSHA 08144 241621Z

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED APPARENTLY SMOOTHED SOME RUFFLED FEATHERS, BUT INHERENT DIFFICULTIES IN DIVERGENT ZAIRIAN AND AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD ROLE OF JOURNALIST AND FREEDOM OF PRESS WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST AND WILL NO DOUBT SURFACE AGAIN DURING INFLUX OF AMERICAN JOURNALISTS AT FIGHT TIME.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: JOURNALISTS, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974KINSHA08144
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740268-0983
From: KINSHASA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740920/aaaaaqfu.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 MAY 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <11 MAR 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOBUTU CRITICIZES "CERTAIN FOREIGN JOURNALISTS " FOR "LIES"
TAGS: PINS, SCUL, CG, (MOBUTU)
To: USIA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005